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ABSTRACT

The Developmental Studies Department (DSD) at Rockland Community College (RCC), in Suffern, New York, provides courses and services to assist students lacking college-level skills in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, study skills, and English. An additional pilot project, the RCC/Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) has provided supplemental education services at a college extension site to a segment of RCC's underserved adult population. Students referred to BOCES are those who are unable to complete written tests, do not qualify for financial aid, and/or applied to RCC late. An evaluation of the DSD and BOCES programs indicated the following: (1) while students in the BOCES program generally showed significant improvement, one area of concern was the lack of a policy on discharging students who do not make progress; (2) all levels of DSD students demonstrated statistically significant growth in reading skills, with students in the highest level course scoring above the RCC proficiency level; (3) writing test results demonstrated that DSD students were in need of basic writing skills instruction and that the instruction did result in improved writing skills; (4) 88% of fall 1990 and 82% of spring 1991 mathematics students had either completed the DSD course with 100% accuracy or made significant progress toward that goal; and (5) in the reading program, students placed at higher levels made significant gains while those who entered at lower levels did not. RCC's competency assessment policy is appended. (MAB)

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ED 366 392

DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT
ROCKLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE-BOARD OF COOPERATIVE
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES PILOT PROJECT
ROCKLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE
1990-1991

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Preface

Rockland Community College (RCC), an open access Community College, functions under the program of the State University of New York. The College is located in a suburban area 35 miles north of New York City. While Rockland County is considered one of the most affluent counties in the state, there are pockets of poverty with a substantial number of Blacks and immigrants (largely Hispanic and Haitian) located within the county. The College has expressed in its mission statement its commitment to serve a wide range of clientele and to provide services necessary to meet the needs of the clientele.

The Developmental Studies Department, established as a College department in the Fall 1987, serves students in need of remedial/developmental services. More than 40% of the entering freshmen who are identified through the College's competency assessment process are enrolled in the department yearly.

The following report: (1) provides an evaluation of student progress in reading, writing, English language and mathematics during the academic year 1990-1991 and (2) provides a report of the Rockland Community College/ Board of Cooperative Educational Services Pilot Project conducted at the College Haverstraw Extension Site, 1990-1991. Recommendations for program and curriculum development are also included.

DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT

The Developmental Studies Department provides courses and services designed to prepare students lacking college level skills to enter college courses and to complete a college degree or certificate. The department currently offers College Skills (CSK) courses which help native American students develop reading, writing, mathematics, and study skills. English as a Second Language (ESL) courses assist students whose native language is not English and help develop oral language, reading, writing, and study skills. College skills and ESL courses are competency based and are designed to provide extensive individualized instruction. The students in College Skills characterize the full range (age, sex, ethnic backgrounds, religions, social class) of clientele at the College. While the ESL enrollment continues to include some 250 students yearly from abroad, the majority of the students in ESL classes (84%) are first generation residents in Rockland County.

Individual assessment and advisement, small group and individual counseling and tutorial services are provided for students enrolled in College Skills and ESL courses. The department continues to provide counseling and tutorial services for College Skills and ESL students who move into the College mainstream as well.

Developmental courses and tutoring in specific areas such as spelling, vocabulary development, and effective listening are offered by Developmental Studies for all Rockland students who can benefit. The department also serves as a faculty development and resource center, providing consultation with College faculty members. Coordinated efforts are developed in courses which include study strategies related to specific content, workshops, and seminars, identification and development of resource materials, and publication of papers and materials.

A diversified staffing model is utilized to provide a maximum of individualized instruction to meet the diverse needs of the students. The staff includes a Chairperson; four Coordinators: (1) College Skills, (2) ESL, (3) Counseling, and (4) Developmental Tutorial Services; plus six full-time instructors, two full-time counselors, some 35 adjunct instructors and counselors, some 25 teaching assistants, and one full-time and one part-time clerical assistant.

ASSESSMENT, PLACEMENT, ADVISEMENT

Students are placed in College Skills or ESL as a result of College English and Mathematics Assessments (See Appendix A). The assessment process is designed to ensure that all students are placed into course work appropriate to their skills.

All entering students who have not previously attended college and are planning full-time enrollment (12 or more degree credits) take the Rockland Community College English and Mathematics Assessments as soon as possible after acceptance to the College. Part-time students registering for English Composition or Business Correspondence (ENG 101, BUS 101) must take the English Assessment before enrolling, regardless of the number of degree credits already earned.

Part-time students who intend to register for a credit-bearing mathematics course or Calculations for Pharmacology (NUR 103) must take the Mathematics Assessment before enrolling in the course, regardless of the number of credits already earned. All other part-time students enrolling for less than 12 credits will be required to take the English and Mathematics Assessments before registering for their twelfth degree credit. Federal regulations mandate that the College determine that entering students who receive financial aid have the potential to succeed in college and that they receive appropriate remedial/developmental services to help them succeed in college. Therefore, all full-time and part-time students applying for financial aid must take the

Rockland Community College English and Mathematics Placement Examinations before registering for courses as well. The English Placement Examination (EPE) consists of an evaluation of reading comprehension (Comprehension Section of Descriptive Tests of Language Skills - DTLS) and a writing sample on a given topic scored holistically by trained readers. The Mathematics Placement Examination (MPE) includes an in-house computation section and an algebra section.

Students must demonstrate minimum competencies in reading, writing and mathematics to be permitted to enroll in various mainstream English and mathematics courses and to meet graduation requirements from Rockland Community College. Students placed into College Skills and ESL courses are permitted to retake all or a portion of the EPE at the end of each semester they are enrolled in College Skills or ESL courses. Students placed into Mathematics Skills must complete the course satisfactorily prior to graduation.

After placement into College Skills or ESL each student has a conference with Developmental Studies Department instructors and counselors for needs assessment and to determine a course of study. Students are assigned to non-credit College Skills or ESL courses until re-assessment shows that they are ready to move into mainstream courses. Some, when the appropriate skill level has bee reached, may select carefully chosen credit-bearing courses while they are enrolled in College Skills or ESL. The College Skills needs

assessment is during College advisement and registration periods. Students are provided a general orientation to the College and College Skills, a tour of the campus, and referral to College counselors who determine financial aid eligibility and assess each student's full financial need. College Skills instructors explain the College assessment test results and the content of the various College Skills courses to which students have been assigned. Department counselors discuss with the students their vocational objectives and options and the estimated number of semesters they are likely to be in College Skills and then assist the students in selecting courses and completing the registration process.

During the English as a Second Language needs assessment process, which is scheduled during College registration periods, the students also receive orientation and referral for financial aid counseling. They participate in additional ESL in-house testing in English language development, reading and writing for placement in specific ESL courses. The ESL instructors also explain to the students the test results and the content of the courses to which students are assigned. English as a Second Language instructors and/or Developmental Studies Department counselors then discuss with students their vocational objectives and options and the estimated number of semesters they are likely to be in ESL and assist the students in selecting courses and completing the registration process.

COLLEGE SKILLS/ESL COURSES

New students enrolled in College Skills full-time are placed in one of four levels of the non-credit courses, Communication Skills (CSK 011-014), Communication Skills Reinforcement (CSK 021-024), and Developmental Course II (individualized learning activities and computer assisted instruction (CAI)/four credit-free hours based on their scores on the English Placement Examination. The courses are competency based and incorporate objectives in reading, writing, critical thinking and study skills. Students may also enroll in Strategies for College Success (CSK 031) and Understanding Human Behavior (CSK 032). The first course concentrates on an orientation to the nature of higher education with an emphasis on the structure at Rockland Community College and on the development of effective study skills, while the second course deals with the fundamentals of psychology. Students also enroll in specially designed counseling seminars providing one or two credits in psychology. Depending on their curriculum goals and current time commitments new students may or may not enroll in Mathematics Skills (CSK 065) for an additional four contact hours plus Developmental Course V which provides up to six hours of individualized learning activities. Exit criteria are specified for successful completion of each level of Communication Skills and each module of Mathematics Skills.

As they progress through the College Skills courses, students continue to enroll in counseling seminars and are permitted to enroll in some additional credit courses which have been approved by Department Chairpersons and Program Coordinators as appropriate at specific levels of reading and writing proficiency. Part-time students enroll in one of six levels of Communication Skills courses and counseling for a total of six contact/credit hours per semester. They may also enroll in Developmental Course II or V for an additional two hours per week.

Students who have met the minimum competency in reading on the English Placement Examination but have not reached the minimum competency in writing are assigned to Introduction to College Writing (CSK 028). Those students who have met the minimum competency in writing are assigned to Introduction to College Writing but have not reached the minimum competency in reading are permitted to enroll in English Composition I (Eng 101), but must also enroll concurrently in Efficient Reading (CSK 029). In addition to regular sections of English Composition I, the College also offers several special emphasis sections. Often after passing into the mainstream, College Skills students will enroll in ENG 101 (EGR) for additional academic support and ESL students will enroll in ENG 101 International designed for students for whom English is a second language.

Students enrolled in Communication Skills courses take all or part (reading/writing) of the English Placement Examination at the end of each semester until they have met the minimum competencies in reading and writing required for passing into the College mainstream. A modified mastery approach incorporating mediated instruction is utilized in Mathematics Skills. Therefore, students are not required to retake the Mathematics Placement Examination but they must master at a minimum of 80% proficiency each module to which they have been assigned in Mathematics Skills before being permitted to take mainstream mathematics courses. Some students may achieve scores on the Mathematics Placement Examination which will permit them to enroll in Elementary Algebra for College Students (MAT 101) with supplementary College Skills modules in Algebra Reinforcement (CSK 049) as well.

New students assigned to ESL courses full-time may be placed in one of six levels of the course, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESL 035-065), and in one of five levels of the course, ESL Reinforcement Module (ESL 800-821), for eight to eleven contact hours, based on their scores on various instruments including the English as a Second Language Test. These courses incorporate objectives in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The ESL Reinforcement Module utilizes individual and some small group techniques as well as computer assisted instruction.

Students may also enroll in Developmental Course IV which provides up to five hours of additional individual and group activities. Other ESL courses, Writing Module (ESL 071) and Reading Module (ESL 072), concentrate only on development of writing or reading skills. Students also enroll in counseling seminars providing credit in psychology and various approved credit courses while taking ESL courses. Part-time students enroll in one of three levels of ESL courses for six contact hours and Developmental Course IV for four hours of additional individual and group activities or ESL 065-Bridge for a total of eight contact hours per semester.

Students enrolled in ESL courses take all or part (reading/writing) of the English Placement Examination at the end of each semester until they have met the minimum competencies in reading and writing required for passing into the College mainstream.

PHYSICAL FACILITIES

College Skills and English as a Second Language courses are offered at the College's Main Campus in Suffern and at the Extension Site in Haverstraw and the Extension Centers in Nyack and Spring Valley. The majority of the students served in Haverstraw are of Hispanic backgrounds while those enrolled at the Spring Valley Campus are largely Haitian. The Haverstraw Site, located at 15 West Broad Street, is in downtown Haverstraw while the Spring Valley Center is in a former elementary school at 185 North Main Street, just a few blocks from the downtown area. The Nyack Campus, located at

21 North Broadway, is in downtown Nyack.

Space is designated on Main Campus and in Haverstraw and Spring Valley for faculty and staff offices, classrooms and areas for individualized learning activities and CAI tutorials. On Main Campus individualized learning activities are provided in the Individualized Learning Activities Center and CAI tutorials are provided in the Computer Assisted Instruction Laboratory. In Nyack, Haverstraw and Spring Valley there is a Student Development Center which serves to support individualized learning activities and CAI tutorials.

DEVELOPMENTAL TUTORIAL SERVICES

In January, 1991, Developmental Tutorial Services, a new division within the Developmental Studies Department, was established. The division coordinates all of the tutorial services for students enrolled in the Developmental Studies Department courses and all of the tutorial services in reading for mainstream students. The staff includes a Coordinator and paraprofessional tutors. Tutorial services include individual, small group and CAI offerings.

Tutoring in reading, writing, mathematics and English language development is provided for students enrolled in College Skills and ESL classes on Main Campus and at all College Centers and Sites in which College Skills or ESL courses are offered. Tutoring in reading and/or writing is also available for students enrolled in one of the courses, Introduction to College Writing (CSK 028), Efficient Reading

(CSK 029), Writing Module (ESL 071) or Reading Module (ESL 072). Tutoring in reading for mainstream students is available as needed.

Tutoring is also provided for declared learning disabled students enrolled in College Skills or ESL classes. Instructors consult regularly with the College's Learning Disabilities Specialist in diagnosing students' needs and in planning tutorial activities.

SUPPLEMENTAL TUTORIAL SERVICE

While small group and individualized tutoring and CAI tutorials are provided for students enrolled in College Skills and English as a Second Language courses, College resources are limited and are supplemented by funding provided through the Vocational and Applied Educational Act (VATEA) and the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP).

Money from the VATEA Disadvantaged grant focuses on services for disadvantaged students enrolled in College Skills or ESL courses to enable them to be successful in occupational education programs. Educational Opportunity Program funds provide educationally related support services and financial assistance to those students whose educational and economic circumstances have limited their post secondary education opportunity. Some EOP tutorial services are provided for students who are at the advanced levels of College Skills or ESL.

ROCKLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES (BOCES)

PILOT PROJECT

This has been the second year of the RCC/BOCES project at the Haverstraw Extension Site, and it has been quite remarkable in many ways. Significant movement has been made toward providing both meaningful and effective learning to a segment of Rockland County's adult learners that ranks among the most needy of services yet the most "underserved." As throughout the whole phase of the BOCES project with Rockland Community College, much of the success comes from the open channels of communication that exist among the professionals of both institutions. In addition, the goals and objectives were attainable, and areas of responsibility were clearly delineated. On-going supervision done by BOCES representatives and interaction from RCC faculty kept the project on task. The leadership of Mr. Thomas Brennan furnished the direction to the teaching and counseling staff of the program. Furthermore, the BOCES instructor, Mrs. Barbara Brantman, was able to gain the confidence and respect of her students and colleagues due to her professionalism and dedication.

CRITERIA USED FOR ENTRY TO THE RCC/BOCES CLASS:

A client who is referred to the RCC/BOCES class must fall into one of the following categories:

A. The client must have received a score of 10 or below on the English as a Second Language Test (ESLT). He must have been unable to take or complete the Descriptive Test of Language Skills (DTLS) or the Writing Essay from the English Placement Examination. Finally, the client must have indicated his educational level from his native country to be fourth grade or less.

B. The client might have been referred to BOCES directly from the Rockland County Department of Social Services. This person might not qualify for college financial aid because of not having resided in New York State for one year or in Rockland County for six months. His scores might normally place him in the ESL 035 or ESL 036 level. He could benefit from BOCES instruction and would be referred to RCC English as a Second Language courses as soon as he qualified.

C. The client might have requested admission to RCC well after the late registration date. His test scores might normally place him in the ESL 035 or ESL 036 level. Again, within BOCES, this person could benefit from ESL instruction and would be referred to the College ESL courses as soon as he qualified.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The second year's RCC/BOCES English as a Second Language offering at the Haverstraw Extension Site began on September 17, 1990, and classes ran four mornings a week from 9:30 to 12:00. This course has been designed primarily for students who have language deficiencies in both their native language and English. Since it would be almost impossible for them to complete a course of studies and be mainstreamed into the regular curriculum of the Rockland Community College, the RCC/BOCES ESL course at the Haverstraw Extension Site was intended to remediate linguistic problem areas regarding basic communication. In addition, the project has been designed to include some vocational training and/or career exploration.

Progress has been made by all participants in the project; however, success must be measured on an individual basis since each participant entered with his or her own unique areas of strengths and weaknesses. Many BOCES students in this second year of the RCC/BOCES project had first language literacy problems which often impeded their second language acquisition. Others, although having had only limited access to formal education in their countries, had been living here in the U.S. for many years and had acquired language "on the street."

Again, the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) were presented in the BOCES class during the second year. In addition, this second year also contained a counseling component. Since most of the students had limited oral/aural skills, these were the areas stressed. The areas of phonology, semantics, and syntax provided the basis for interrelating the four skills. Furthermore, specific high function vocabulary and structures were taught so that the students would interact with Anglos in a more meaningful manner. In addition, this second year of the project also focused on:

A. "vocational" aspects of finding employment, and
B. "personal" aspects of dealing with social agencies such as Unemployment Office, Social Services, elementary and high schools, etc.

AREA OF CONCERN

At the present time, no students are discharged from the RCC/BOCES course even if he or she has demonstrated minimal or no progress regarding basic English language acquisition over the course of two, three, or even more semesters. Without a clearly articulated policy statement, these students attend class daily without reaping any benefits. Perhaps, these few individuals should be referred for some type of "special education" evaluation to determine if they would be better served through another educational program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The RCC/BOCES course has merit and should be continued.
2. While there has been increased communication among all the professionals of both institutions, goals and strategies should be formally articulated in a written document.
3. A correlation study of the data from the John Test administered by BOCES and the ESLT administered by RCC should be done.
4. Files should be placed at the RCC Haverstraw Extension Site. Both BOCES and RCC professionals should have access to the data which could be used in writing reports, research, grants, etc. Attendance information, student performance on tests (aural, oral, and written), and teacher observations would all serve to provide a picture of the BOCES course's strengths and weaknesses. Often the objective data does not present an accurate profile of the workings of the course, and subjective data could fill in deficit areas.
5. Pamphlets should be printed in Spanish and English which would articulate the goals and objectives of the RCC/ BOCES offering. If the students cannot read, then a "standard" explanation of the course should be done orally in Spanish.
6. While there have been efforts to bring counseling services to the Haverstraw Extension Site, the efforts should be expanded. Many RCC/BOCES class participants

at the Haverstraw Extension Site are illiterate and come from below the poverty level; therefore, these BOCES clients often have difficulty in dealing with schools, children, employment, health officials, and Social Services. BOCES counselors should be particularly sensitive in addressing not only vocational but personal problems of the clients. Bilingual and bicultural staff could be very effective in dealing with these concerns.

7. There should be a sharing of special educational events. BOCES classes should be officially invited to participate in College events such as Hispanic Week, holiday parties, etc.
8. An effort to teach first language skills should be made with those students who have limited native language literacy.
9. When possible, bilingual personnel who have an understanding of the students and their problems should be involved with the delivery of services. Positive role models are crucial to enhance the RCC/BOCES course image both to the students as well as to the outside community.
10. College personnel, such as the student employment counselor, should be asked to work with BOCES students in finding appropriate job placements. Also, guest speakers from the community could be invited to address the students about entry level work options. The Department of Social Services should also be involved

in a pro-active manner in providing solutions.

11. Computer assisted learning should also be offered to the BOCES classes when the computer room is available. If possible, the computer resources of BOCES should be tapped to provide ESL software which could be used for RCC/BOCES participants.

Fall 1990 - BOCES ATTENDANCE STATISTICS

Sept. 17, 1990 to Dec. 20, 1990 -- 50 Days of Class

Total Number of Students: 18

Student	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Days Present
DE LEON, ISRAEL	4	11	7	6	28
GARCIA, ARELIS	6	14	7	9	36
GIRALDO, OLGA	-	3	9	10	22*
GOMEZ, MARIA	-	--	13	10	23
GONZALES, MARIA	7	16	9	9	41
HENRIQUEZ, ESTELA	6	10	9	8	33
HERNANDO, GUSTAVO	4	4	--	--	8*
JIMENEZ, ANGELA	1	16	13	9	39*
JIMENEZ, MARIA	6	15	11	11	43
MARTINEZ, MIRIAM	7	14	10	8	39
MATOS, RAMONA	-	3	8	7	18*
MORENO, ANA	3	12	10	8	33
PEREZ, MERCEDES	4	12	7	6	29
RODRIGUEZ, JOSE	5	14	4	0	23*
SANTIAGO, TRINIDAD	7	18	12	10	47
SOSA, JUAN	4	16	10	8	38
TORREZ, HILL	5	15	--	--	20*
VELEZ, MARTA	5	17	12	4	38

*Giraldo, Maria	Began	10/29/90
*Hernando, Gustavo	Left	10/04/90
*Jimenez, Angela	Began	09/27/90
*Matos, Ramona	Began	10/29/90
*Rodriguez, Jose	Left	12/90
*Torres, Hill	Left	10/29/90

SPRING 1991 - BOCES ATTENDANCE STATISTICS

February 8, 1991 to May 16, 1991 -- 45 Days of Class

Total Number of Students: 25

Student	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Days Present
ARCE, JACQUELINE	6	7	10	4	27
BUENO, MERCEDES	9	8	10	8	35
DE LEON, ELENA	3	9	10	2	24*
DE LEON, ISRAEL**	3	11	12	2	28*
DEL ROSARIO, EUFEMIA	9	9	8	8	34
GERALDO, FONDEUR	2	10	0	0	12*
GERMOSEN, ISOLA	6	11	3	2	22
GERMOSEN, JENNY	6	11	4	0	21
GIRALDO, OLGA**	8	7	6	9	30*
GOMEZ, MARIA**	9	11	9	9	38
HENRIQUEZ, ESTELA**	5	5	9	8	27
HILARIO, ELSA	4	11	10	9	34
JIMENEZ, MARIA**	8	11	12	9	40
MARTINEZ, MAXIMO	8	9	0	0	17*
MATOS, RAMONA	6	8	0	0	14*
MIRANDA, CANDIDO	10	12	1	6	38
MONTANEZ, ANAIDA	6	10	6	0	22*
PEREZ, MARIA	4	12	7	2	25*
QUEZADA, LEOCADIA	9	10	9	8	36
RODRIGUEZ, ANA	6	9	6	5	26
SANTIAGO, TRINIDAD**	7	7	3	2	19*
SOSA, JUAN	4	4	11	9	28*

TAVAREZ, REYES	7	6	8	1	22*
URENA, DIONISIA	2	9	9	6	26
VELEZ, MARTA**	9	7	9	8	33

** Continuing Student from Fall 1990 Term

* DE LEON, ELENA	Left 05/02/91	Caring for sick husband
* DE LEON, ISRAEL	Left 05/02/91	Health Problems
* GERALDO, FONDEUR	Left 03/19/91	Health Problems
* GERALDO, MARIA	Some Absences	Due to Surgery
* MARTINEZ, MAXIMO	Left 03/21/91	Working at Home
* MATOS, RAMONA	Left 03/21/91	Working at Home
* MONTANEZ, ANAIDA	Left 04/17/91	Returned to Domin. Rep.
* PEREZ, MARIA	Some Absences	Sick Children
* SOSA, JUAN	Some Absences	Illness in Family
* TAVAREZ, REYES	Left 05/02/91	Working

COLLEGE SKILLS

The achievement of students enrolled in College Skills courses in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics during the 1990-1991 academic year will be described in this section.

READING

Students' performance in reading was assessed using the Descriptive Tests of Language Skills (DTLS). The DTLS serves as the reading assessment instrument for all students entering Rockland Community College.

The DTLS results for 1990-1991 are summarized in Table 1. All levels of Skills students demonstrated statistically significant growth in reading. Of note in this table is that students in the highest level of College Skills (CSK 029) achieved mean post test scores which exceeded the College proficiency level of scaled score 11.

TABLE 1

DTLS PRE TO POST-TEST SCORES
FOR ALL COLLEGE SKILLS STUDENTS
BY LEVEL

1990-1991

	Pre-Test			Post-Test			
Group	**N**	$\bar{X}$	S	$\bar{X}$	S	t	p
011	26	2.62	1.92	7.08	3.24	5.34	.001
012	8	1.75	0.89	5.50	2.93	3.64	.008
013	89	4.76	1.58	9.20	4.10	10.10	.001
014	104	7.12	1.58	10.83	3.93	9.88	.001
029	172	8.42	2.00	13.35	4.68	11.84	.001

WRITING

Students' writing competency was assessed through the writing sample which is a part of the English Placement Examination.

This test, administered to all incoming students at Rockland Community College, served as both pre-test and as a placement indicator (as do DTLS scores) for students. Writing samples were scored holistically by a team of trained readers. Each essay was read and scored twice, independently, and the sum of the two scores is the student's writing score. Native English speaking students whose scores fall below the minimum competency level established by the College (score = 6) were assigned to College Skills courses. Students' post-tests produced at the end of the semester were scored similarly and in blind readings with essays from new incoming students. The results in writing for the various levels of College Skills for the academic year are summarized in Table 2. All levels of College Skills made statistically significant gains.

The writing test results demonstrate that the College Skills population was in need of basic writing skills instruction and that for the most part, the results of that instruction were beneficial and did result in improved writing skills.

TABLE 2

PRE-POST WRITING SCORES FOR
ALL COLLEGE SKILLS STUDENTS
BY LEVEL

1990 - 1991

	Pre-Test			Post-Test			
Group	**N**	$\bar{X}$	S	$\bar{X}$	S	t	p
011	26	3.62	1.06	4.15	1.00	2.06	.05
012	8	3.25	0.89	4.50	1.31	3.99	.005
013	89	4.40	0.90	5.20	1.05	6.38	.001
014	104	5.40	0.94	6.01	1.30	4.12	.001
028	130	4.05	0.30	5.83	1.40	14.39	.001
Total	442	4.49	1.02	5.47	1.36	14.16	.001

MATHEMATICS

Students whose Mathematics Placement scores indicated that they had not yet reached the level established as an indication of competency were assigned to Mathematics Skills (CSK 065). This course has been designed for students with remedial and developmental skills needs in mathematics and operates on a highly individualized basis. Students are assigned work in specified modules based on their diagnosed areas of need. Their progress is carefully monitored and their final grades reflect the degree to which they have mastered the content. In order to receive a P (pass) grade, a student has to complete the modules assigned and to achieve 100% accuracy on the tests associated with each module. An IP (in progress) grade is assigned to those students who made significant progress in their work and were close to completing their assigned modules. Students who did not demonstrate sustained work and therefore did not make satisfactory progress were assigned U (unsatisfactory) grades.

Table 3 summarizes the results of the Fall semester and Table 4 summarizes the results for Spring semester. The level of P and IP grades combined are similar to those for prior years (range 82-85% for Fall semesters and 75-79% for Spring semesters). The current year figures are 88% Fall and 82% Spring. It is also worth noting that although the overall P/IP rate is roughly similar for day and evening students, the part-time, evening students progress at a much slower rate, earning fewer P grades and more IP grades than do their full-time, day counterparts. Until last year, evening students also had a much higher failure rate than did the day students. Concern over the much higher failure rate in this group prompted the implementation of an intervention strategy for evening students in Spring 1989. When students were not in attendance at the Mathematics Lab for one week, they were called at home and urged to attend. The results in the first semester were striking; combined P/IP grades were 85%. This intervention strategy was continued during the current academic year with the result that in the Fall semester the combined P/IP rate for evening students was 88% and in the Spring semester it was 74%. In sum, there can be no question that students enrolled in Mathematics Skills continue to demonstrate significant growth in mathematics.

TABLE 3

NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF
STUDENTS RECEIVING GRADES IN
MATHEMATICS SKILLS CSK 065

FALL 1990

	P		IP		U		
Group	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**Total N**
Day	151	69.0	41	18.7	27	12.3	219
Evening	9	20.9	29	67.4	5	11.6	43
Total	160	61.1	70	26.7	32	12.2	262

TABLE 4

SPRING 1991

	P		IP		U		
Group	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**Total N**
Day	142	67.3	34	16.1	35	16.6	211
Evening	17	39.5	15	34.8	11	25.6	43
Total	159	62.6	49	19.3	46	18.1	254

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Many of the students who require remedial and developmental instruction are those for whom English is a non-native language. This instruction includes practice in oral and written English. Students' placements in sections of classes and subsequent instructional emphasis are determined by performance on the English Placement Examination (scores on a writing sample and on the DTLS), the English as a Second Language Test and a personal interview.

READING

Table #5 summarizes the DTLS test scores for students enrolled in 1990-1991. The data are presented separately for each level. The results present a mixed picture. Generally, students who were initially placed at a higher level made significant gains while those who entered at lower levels did not, and full-time students outperformed part-time students.

TABLE 5

PRE-POST DTLS SCORES
FOR ALL ESL STUDENTS
BY LEVEL

1990-1991

	Pre-Test			Post-Test			
Group	N	$\bar{X}$	S	$\bar{X}$	S	t	p
030	61	1.51	1.50	1.64	1.25	0.49	NS
035	58	1.41	0.96	1.59	1.20	0.83	NS
036	81	1.80	1.42	1.81	1.39	0.06	NS
040	76	2.03	1.68	2.04	1.80	0.06	NS
041	75	3.31	3.11	3.55	2.81	0.48	NS
045	125	2.30	2.17	4.64	3.37	6.98	.001
046	146	3.04	2.14	6.05	3.65	9.30	.001
055	130	4.34	2.70	9.24	4.64	8.47	.001
065	199	6.60	3.76	11.07	4.78	11.23	.001
072	23	6.65	1.80	14.04	3.74	9.16	.001

WRITING

Table 6 shows the results of the writing test scores for students in the 1990 - 1991 academic year. Growth in writing seemed to occur for most students as demonstrated by the statistically significant gains. It should be noted that gains in writing were much more pervasive than were gains in reading. One may hypothesize that the increased and integrated tutoring available to students and the increased availability of Computer Assisted Instruction, especially word processing, may have produced this salutary effect on writing skills. One cannot overlook, however, the fact that the writing scores of lower level students may have been affected less by improvements in writing than by improvements in general language proficiency which may unduly affect their very low writing scores. (Students who write nothing on their writing tests receive a 0 score; students who make some attempt to write an essay, however poor their English proficiency, will usually be scored at least 2.) In other words, the apparent increase in writing skills for lowest level students may be as much an artifact of the scoring system as an improvement in actual writing skills.

TABLE 6

PRE-POST WRITING SCORES
FOR ALL ESL STUDENTS
BY LEVEL

1990 - 1991

	Pre-Test			Post-Test			
Group	N	$\bar{X}$	S	$\bar{X}$	S	t	p
030	60	1.10	1.20	2.07	0.84	5.81	.001
035	58	0.48	0.86	1.79	0.87	9.54	.001
036	79	1.73	1.24	2.44	1.00	4.95	.001
040	79	2.39	1.08	2.72	0.93	2.54	.01
041	76	3.37	1.01	3.48	0.97	0.79	NS
045	121	2.90	1.10	3.60	0.99	5.88	.001
046	146	3.64	0.80	4.13	1.16	4.73	.001
055	118	3.96	0.78	4.86	1.29	7.35	.001
065	198	4.45	0.95	4.97	1.29	5.33	.001

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

Students in the ESL courses also take the English as a Second Language Test which includes measures of general language usage, grammar, syntax, idiom and aural skills. Table 7 summarizes the results of this test for students in ESL 1990 - 1991. All groups of students demonstrated statistically significant gains in general language skills.

TABLE 7

PRE-POST ESLT TEST SCORES
FOR ALL ESL STUDENTS
BY LEVEL

1990-1991

	Pre-Test			Post-Test			
Group	N	$\bar{X}$	S	$\bar{X}$	S	t	p
030	74	16.73	8.72	20.15	7.25	4.60	.001
035	57	16.28	7.84	20.53	9.24	4.42	.001
036	56	25.50	7.28	31.00	7.43	5.36	.001
040	83	28.00	6.16	31.82	7.70	5.82	.001
041	89	35.62	5.45	39.33	5.21	6.85	.001
045	107	33.19	5.85	38.10	7.05	8.46	.001
046	109	39.61	5.18	42.39	4.07	5.00	.001
055	108	42.30	3.62	44.83	3.22	6.36	.001
065	153	43.55	3.84	44.25	3.47	2.40	.02

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary and most significant conclusion that one can draw after examining all of the data is that almost all groups of students enrolled in the Developmental Studies Department demonstrated growth in reading, writing, and general language skills over the course of the academic year 1990-1991.

For College Skills students, the mean post-test DTLS score for all students, regardless of level was 10.91, just slightly below the cut-off score for demonstrating minimum competency (score = 11). Similarly for writing, the mean post-test writing score for all College Skills students was 5.47, which approaches the College cut-off score of 6. These scores represent significant progress for the College Skills students and lead to the conclusion that, for the most part, the placements for students are accurate, the curricula are meeting their needs, and the quantity and quality of instruction are sufficient.

Many of the ESL students within the Developmental Studies Department demonstrated positive growth in reading, writing, and general language development, but the data reveal a mixed picture of development depending upon level of placement and full-time/part-time status.

In reading, for example, lower level full and part-time students did not show significant growth. In writing, almost all students showed significant growth during the year. In general language development, all students demonstrated

growth.

In spite of the general language and skills development of ESL students, the average post-test scores of students are far below the College competency level in both reading and writing. Only at levels 065 and higher do post-test scores approach or exceed the College cut-offs in reading and writing. It is important to remember that we are looking at averages for groups; obviously, some students at other levels did achieve competency level scores in reading and writing and were able to move into the mainstream. What is apparent is that there appear to be many more students at lower levels in ESL at all the campuses, and that the program as constituted is experiencing difficulty in raising competency levels within the framework of one academic year.

It would seem that the major factor contributing to the differences in achievement levels between ESL and College Skills students is the presence in ESL of many more students whose reading, writing, and language skills are at very low levels. The presence of lower level students in higher numbers results in lowering the pre- and post-test averages on each of the variables. Thus, many students potentially would spend many more semesters in ESL courses in order to reach the minimum competency level. The bulk of the resources available for the instruction of ESL students are expended on those with the lowest levels of skills. This fact leads to another hypothesis about why the ESL students' average post-test scores are low, namely the nature of the

instruction for ESL students.

If students enter ESL with very low levels of proficiency in English, much of the instruction must be designed to improve general language proficiency. The nature of this instruction focuses on grammar, syntax, idiom, and vocabulary development. Development of skill in reading and writing is incidental; reading and writing are utilized as modes through which the major instructional objectives relating to language development are realized. It is only after students have grasped the basic structures, vocabulary and grammar of English, that they can turn their attention to the more advanced skills involved in reading and writing. It is not that reading and writing do not exist in the lower skill level classrooms; it is that the nature of that reading and writing does not begin to approach the difficulty or complexity required for meeting the College competency level and for functioning in College classes conducted in English. Therefore, it is hypothesized that another major factor influencing achievement levels and related to the first factor, the characteristics of the ESL students, is the nature of the instruction, specifically that the objectives of the bulk of the instruction in ESL are to improve language proficiency. That this goal is being met can be seen by across-the-board gains for all students on the English as a Second Language test.

Unfortunately, this test has no known norms and no known validity; therefore, there is no way to know what the scores mean or how much is enough in order to be able to focus on higher level reading and writing skills. This factor, coupled with the fact that neither the DTLS nor the writing sample are useful for making discriminations between students at the lower end of their scales, means that placement in ESL sections reduces itself to some very subjective factors with low levels of consistency both within and across Extension Sites and Centers. Thus, another factor which may be contributing to the lower levels of achievement is the inadequacy and inconsistency of the placement procedures. The effect of this insufficiency on instruction is that conscientious instructors like those in ESL will modify the curriculum and the instructional objectives to match their students' needs and abilities which, in turn, impacts negatively on the end of semester reading and writing test scores.

The data and the conclusions reported here have remained remarkably consistent for the past three years. It follows that the issues raised and the recommendations will also be the same as those presented in last year's report. Having postulated some factors which may be useful in explaining the data, we are left with some questions which now, more than ever, need to be resolved.

First, there is the question of the ESL students, namely, who should be a student within a college-level ESL program? What level of skill and proficiency with the English language should a potential student have? There are constraints which make answering these questions a necessity; those associated with the allocation of College resources and those imposed externally by the availability and duration of financial aid. Many colleges deal with this issue by setting minimum proficiency levels for admission to the college-level ESL courses. In the case of students from abroad, results of TOEFL must be above certain cut-off levels in order for students to qualify for admission. In the case of resident students, results of other tests of language proficiency for which norming and validity data exist must be above specified cut-off levels.

Looking at the data that is available for the last three years suggests that reasonably consistent progress in reading and writing requires entering the sequence with the following minimum scores:

25 on the ESLT

3 on the Writing Sample

3-4 on the DTLS

This suggestion is based on an intuitive rather than an empirical approach. While this may be a reasonable first step in determining eligibility, final determinations of levels of proficiency must await the outcome of an empirical study.

Next, there is the question of the nature of the instruction provided to ESL students within the college-level program. How much instruction should be provided in general language proficiency and how much in the reading and writing skills necessary for achieving satisfactory grades in college courses taught in English? Most colleges provide between one and three semesters of instruction below the level of introductory college courses. Financial aid guidelines would dictate a maximum of four semesters if there are a sufficient number of credit bearing courses which students can take that do not rely too heavily on reading and writing as the primary modes of instruction and evaluation. It would seem that the bulk of the instruction within the ESL sequence should be focused on improving reading and writing skills in English.

Third, there is the question of how to place students accurately so that they get the kind of instruction they need and can potentially move through the sequence experiencing success and developing the skills they need in order to move into the mainstream within a predictable and realistic time frame. When instruments are found to determine admission, they may also be used along with currently existing assessment instruments in developing criteria for placement and movement between levels. It may be necessary to make some modifications in the scoring scale for the writing assessment, especially at its lower end, in order to improve its usefulness for placement of ESL students. These placement decisions must be developed utilizing the most

objective criteria that can be devised; they must be consistently applied at all the Extension Centers and Sites and for all categories of students: ultimately, they must be validated through some kind of empirical study.

Finally, there is the last question: What happens to the students who do not have sufficient language proficiency to be admitted to a college level ESL sequence? Prior years' evaluations have suggested that many of the lower level ESL students have a desire to improve their English language skills but not necessarily an immediate desire to pursue a college education. Developing a literacy program under the aegis of the College but not within the framework of the College curriculum solves the problems of both sets of students: those denied admission because of low proficiency and those desiring only to improve their English proficiency. Completion of this program at a satisfactory level of proficiency could become part of the criteria for admission to the college-level ESL sequence, should an individual desire to pursue college work.

In an attempt to address the issue just raised, a pilot program in English Language Literacy was undertaken in 1989-1990 in cooperation with BOCES at the Haverstraw Site. (See S. Drinane's report pp. 21-28 in 1989-1990 Annual Report and his report on the 1990-1991 pilot in this report pp. 12-21.) It is very difficult to draw many conclusions from this report about the success or the failure of the pilot, or about how the students fared as a result of the instruction.

Since the BOCES program encompassed many fewer hours of instruction than the Haverstraw program, it would be difficult to imagine that students experienced as much growth in language proficiency as they would have if they had been in the College program. It would seem reasonable to propose that the BOCES program should develop different levels and be able to accommodate more levels of students. It is highly probable that given the level of proficiency of students attending the Haverstraw Site none of these students should be in a college-level program. There is virtually no difference between the scores of students enrolled in the College ESL courses this year and last year. It would seem that the major criterion for placement in BOCES was first language illiteracy or expediency. Without knowing exactly what the placement criteria were, what the John Test measures, what levels of instruction are available, and what the criteria for success are, it is very difficult to assess the impact of this pilot. Perhaps incorporating the evaluation of the pilot into the evaluation of Developmental Studies in subsequent years would be advisable.

Currently only students from Haverstraw are being accommodated by the BOCES program; however, it is increasingly apparent that lower level students from Spring Valley and from Main Campus should probably not be attending a college-level ESL program, i.e., those placed at the following levels: 030, 035, 036, 040, 041, and 045. Because these represent a large number of students at a variety of

skill levels, an alternate sequence through BOCES and/or under the umbrella of the credit-free program needs to be developed. The currently developed BOCES pilot is one small step in the right direction, but it is much too restricted as it now stands.

In summary, the questions raised and the solutions proposed and begun require time and attention from the faculty and the administration. Time will be required for finding and/or developing instruments and procedures for admission, placement, and movement. Time will be needed to make curricular modifications. Staff development will be needed to support faculty who may be moving in new and different directions. Institutional support will be needed and leadership required if an extensive new credit-free program is to be developed and alternative funding sources are to be cultivated. In short, these recommendations can only be implemented if the College administration can provide support, attention, time, and effort in support of these activities.

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Appendix A

RCC Competency Assessment Policy

APPENDIX A

RCC COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT POLICY

ASSESSMENT

To ensure that all students are placed into course work appropriate to their skills, Rockland Community College has a policy of assessing all applicants for placement in English and mathematics courses. The English Assessment consists of a reading comprehension evaluation and a writing sample on a given topic. As a result of these assessments, students may be placed in English Composition, College Skills, or English as a Second Language courses. The Mathematics assessment includes a required computation section and an algebra section which students are encouraged to take. Students may be placed in Mathematics Skills, College Mathematics, Intermediate Algebra, or one of the more advanced courses offered by the Mathematics Department.

First-Time College Students:

All entering students who have not previously attended college and are planning full-time enrollment (12 or more degree credits) should take the English and Mathematics Assessment as soon as possible after acceptance into the College--and before registration. This applies to all students, including those at Extension Centers and Sites.

An entering student does not have to take the English Placement Examination if, in the judgment of the English as a Second Language (ESL) faculty coordinator or College Skills instructor, the student cannot perform on the assessment, is to be placed into a beginning section of ESL or Communication Skills (CSK 011 or CSK 071 or CSK 072), and will be taking no other courses. A waiver form for the English Assessment must be signed by the ESL coordinator or College Skills instructor and filed in the Office of the Director of Assessment and Placement.

Part-time students who intend to register for a credit-bearing mathematics course must take the Mathematics Assessment before enrolling in the course, regardless of the number of credits already earned.

Part-time students registering for English 101 or Business Correspondence (ENG 110, BUS 110) must take the English Assessment before enrolling, regardless of the number of degree credits already earned.

All other part-time students enrolling for less than 12 credits will be required to take the English and Mathematics Assessments before registering for their sixteenth degree credit.

Transfer Students:

In accordance with Rockland's policy on Advanced Standing, transfer students may be exempt from the English and/or Mathematics Assessment, based on a review of their previous academic record. However, when applying to specific programs, they may be required to take the English and/or Mathematics Assessment.

Retaking Assessments and Appeals Procedure:

You are allowed to take the English and/or Mathematics Assessment only once for each semester's placement. Only those sections of the assessment necessary for placement in specific courses need be retaken.

If you wish to appeal the placement decision in English or mathematics, you may obtain information about the appeals procedure from the Office of Assessment and Placement, Building D.